



**Testimony of Robin Salvatore  
Re: SB 164**

**Labor and Public Employees Committee, February 26, 2019**

Good afternoon, Senator Kushner, Representative Porter, and members of the Labor Committee.

My name is Robin Salvatore retired Master Patrol Officer with the Montville Police Department, a member of AFSCME Council 4, and former President of my union.

I am here to share my experience and voice support for **Senate Bill 164 AN ACT INCLUDING CERTAIN MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "PERSONAL INJURY" UNDER THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION STATUTES.**

On January 29, 2017, I arrived as backup to a call at a motel where a customer refused to pay his bill and leave the premises. I urged this man to pay his bill to avoid being arrested for theft of services and offered to contact a shelter to find him a place to stay.

The male suddenly lunged at me, grabbing my Taser out of my security holster. I backed away and ordered him several times to put the Taser down, but he charged towards me shouting repeatedly, "I'm going to kill you, you f'ing cop." He ran after me and stunned my vest, then he struck me in the head several times with the Taser and punched me. Blood was pouring down my face. Believing he was going to kill me, I fired one round from my handgun and struck him in the abdomen. He later died in route to the hospital. I had multiple injuries and required several staples for the wound on my head. I know my actions saved my life, and prevented harm to motel residents.

On March 19, 2018, Windham State's Attorney Anne Mahoney cleared me of any wrongdoing and said I was justified in my use of deadly physical force.

I experienced multiple terrible calls during my almost 29 years of service; from seeing a child who had been killed with a shotgun by one of his siblings, to a grandmother who lost her life in a horrific crash with a drunk driver, and this is only a small fraction of what I witnessed during my career. I also volunteered

for several days at Ground Zero after 9/11. All of those memories were buried in my mind until the shooting. But my life changed that day. I now live with nightmares of the shooting and every other terrible thing I experienced during my career. In law enforcement when you show emotion or ask for help dealing with these type of incidents you are shunned and thought of as a big baby, especially if you are a woman. I was receiving the help I needed physically and mentally, but my career was ended when I was told by my employer to retire or I would be terminated.

I loved being a police officer and helping people. I wanted to return to the force and resume my duties. If legislation such as proposed Senate Bill 164 had been in place, I believe I would have received the support necessary to fully heal and return to my job. Absent this legislation, seriously injured officers will continue to be casualties of an indifferent system. I am living proof of that.

Like my fellow officers in blue and brothers in the fire department, I understand the dangers of the job. But too many have been forced out, are quitting or worse - committing suicide. We need your help in order to get and retain good people on the job. I urge you to support SB 164. Thank you.